



Dennis L. Darby

Panola County Sheriff

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Chris Franklin – Chief Deputy

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Deputy Statement

On Nov. 14, 2013 at approximately 2:13pm I heard several patrol units pass my residence with sirens activated. I turned my radio and heard Commander Bill McGhee of the Panola County Task Force make scene in Como so I sent him a text message asking what they had going on.

It took him a while to text back so I called dispatch and they advised there was a shooting in Como at the apartments on Church Ext. Shortly after Commander McGhee text me and advised the situation. I told him to let me know if needed me and he said to come on out because they may have to enter a house.

I made scene around 2:30pm. When I arrived the victim was already gone with MedStat but several Panola County deputies and investigators were still on scene. I did observe Asst. Chief Faye Pettis on scene for a short time after I arrived but she left for a long period of time.

During her absence I observed evidence being collected and witness statements being taken by investigators from Panola County Sheriff's Dept.

While talking with Sheriff Dennis Darby, I observed Chief Earl Burdette and Asst. Chief Pettis arrive back at the scene. Chief Burdette went the suspect's residence and Asst. Chief Pettis stayed in the parking lot of the apartments. Agent Heath Farrish with MBI arrived about the same time they did and came over to the sheriff and me. He advised that he was told by Peter Clinton that Panola County was handling the case and he was there to assist if needed. Agent Farrish was briefed by Detective Jason Chrestman. Detective Chrestman also advised that Lt. John Still was on his way back to the scene with three witnesses and they were stopping somewhere in Como to pick up the gun used in the assault.

When Lt. Still arrived back at the scene he had the gun and I observed two black males walking behind him. I observed one of the black males that was wearing a black jacket and had longer hair quickly walk away.

I went to my patrol unit to get statement forms. After getting the forms Detective Danny Beavers approached me and asked where the other witness was. I asked if it was the one with long hair and a black jacket and Detective Beavers said yes. I saw him walking across the parking lot with Chief Burdette.

I advised Detective Beavers and Sheriff Darby what I saw and confirmed with Detective Jimmy Shannon that he was needed for a statement.

The male got into the patrol unit with Chief Burdette and they started to drive away. The sheriff waved Chief Burdette down and he stopped and backed up. Sheriff Darby and Detective Beavers approached the vehicle and the sheriff opened the passenger door. I observed Chief Burdette speed off abruptly while the sheriff was still standing at the doorway with his body still halfway in the vehicle.

I ran towards the vehicle and the sheriff advised we needed to go to the Como Police Dept. to retrieve the witness. I got into the vehicle with the sheriff and started my digital recorder advising the date, time, and nature of the situation at 3:53pm.

When the sheriff and I arrived at the police dept. Chief Burdette met us at the back door. He was visibly agitated and told us we were not coming into the building. Sheriff Darby stated we needed to speak with the witness and tried to enter the building. At that point Chief Burdette shoved Sheriff Darby. Sheriff Darby and I attempted to restrain Chief Burdette but he and Asst. Chief Pettis continued to try to push us out of the doorway. Chief Burdette pulled out his OC spray and I yelled at him not to spray us.

Once Sheriff Darby was able to get Chief Burdette subdued against the wall, I turned to deal with the witness's family members that were trying to enter the police dept. and told them to get back. Chief Burdette was still trying to actively resist Sheriff Darby and I ran to the patrol office to get the witness out of there so we could leave the dept. He stated he wanted to speak with Asst. Chief Pettis and I explained we were handling the case. Asst. Chief Pettis came back to the office and grabbed me trying to push me out of the office and I told her several times to let me go.

At that point Sheriff Darby, Chief Deputy Chris Franklin, Detective Beavers, Detective Chrestman, Lt. Still, and entered the office the office. There was a lot more yelling on Chief Burdette and Asst. Chief Pettis's part. All members of Panola County Sheriff's Dept. were attempting to calm them both down and explain that we were in control of the case and therefore needed to speak with the witness. The witness's family members entered the office and his mother told him he was in enough trouble so keep his mouth shut and do what he was told.

Detective Beavers stepped in front of Chief Burdette and was asking him to please calm down. Chief Burdette slammed both his fists into Detective Beavers chest pushing him back.

Agent Farrish stepped in and began delegating what was going to happen with the witness. Detective Beavers and I stepped outside the building. We heard more yelling and what sounded like a scuffle going on inside so we ran back to the patrol office and I observed Sheriff Darby, Chief Deputy Franklin, Detective Chrestman, Lt. Still and Agent Farrish trying to restrain Chief Burdette over the desk. I directed the witness and his family outside. Asst Chief Pettis was trying to pull everyone off of Chief Burdette.

Once Chief Burdette's handgun was secured I put handcuffs on him at approximately 4:05pm and patted him down for anymore weapons. We removed him gun belt and he was put into Lt. Still's patrol unit. He was transported to Panola County Sheriff's Dept.

Deputy Emily K. Griffin P-16

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